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Message Text

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SUBJ: OLOMOUC ENGLISH TEACHING SEMINAR

1. RECENTLY COMPLETED OLOMOUC ENGLISH TEACHING SEMINAR FOR 60 CZECHOSLOVAK ADVANCED LEVEL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH WAS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL, LARGELY DUETO EFFORTS OF CU AMSPEC GRANTEE MILNE HOLTON, FOLK SINGER CHARLES FULTON, WHO CAME TO US VIA RPO-VIENNA, AND THE USE OF AMERICAN FILMS, BOOKS, AND RECORDS, MOST OF WHICH CAME FROM ICS AND IMV.

2. THIS ANNUAL SEMINAR IS ONE OF TWO OPPORTUNITIES THE POST HAS FOR DIRECT CONTACT WITH CZECHOSLOVAK TEACHERS. THE OTHER IS THE ANNUAL FRENSTADT TEACHERS SEMINAR HELD IN JULY. OTHERWISE, TEACHERS ARE RELUCTANT TO VISIT OR WRITE THE EMBASSY AND CONTACT WITH THEM IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE. LIKEWISE, THE SEMINARS ARE ABOUT THE ONLY OCCASIONS MOST HAVE FOR OBTAINING AMERICAN ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIALS, HEARING CURRENT RECORDS, SEEING FILMS, AND TALKING WITH NATIVE-SPEAKING AMERICANS. BOTH SEMINARS ARE LIKEWSIE SUPPORTED BY BRITISH COUNCIL, AND THERE ARE FRENCH AND LARGE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE SEMINARS RUN CONCURRENTLY AS WELL.

3. IN THE CASE OF OLOMOUC, HOLTON'S LECTURES ON AMERICAN LITERATURE, LIFE, AND CULTURE, AND SUSAN SAVAGE'S ON
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LINGUISTICS, WERE EXTREMELY WELL RECEIVED. HOLTON WAS

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ASKED BACK TO GIVE A SERIES OF TALKS ON AMERICAN POETRY
NEXT SPRING. FOLK-SINGER FULTON, DISCOVERED FOR US BY
RPO VIENNA'S NANCY PLON, TURNED OUT TO BE THE SHOW-STOPPER,
AS WAS THE CASE EARLIER AT FRENSTADT. HE CONDUCTED TWO
SEMINARS ON AMERICAN AND ANGLO-AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC, AND
GAVE A PUBLIC CONCERT SATURDAY NIGHT FOR THE ENTIRE SEMINAR
STAFF AND STUDENTS. THE OLOMOUC FACULTY, UNTIL NOW EXTREMELY
RELUCTANT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH AMERICANS, INVITED
HIM BACK FOR A CONCERT THIS WINTER, AND THE LOCAL BRITISH
COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE SAID COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO USE HIM
IN ITS PROGRAMMING AS WELL. HOLTON, VETERAN OF NUMEROUS SUCH
SEMINARS IN POLAND AND YUGOSLAVIA, USED A TOTAL OF 13
IMV FILMS AT THE SEMINAR, AND DISTRIBUTED NUMEROUS ICS BOOKS
AND RECORDS AS WELL.

4. WHILE THIS EVENT WAS ALL WE HOPED IT MIGHT BE AND A BIT
MORE, POST WAS PERPLEXED TO HEAR OF CU'S REPORTED DECISION
NOT TO FUND AMSPECIALIST ENGLISH TEACHING GRANTS FOR
SPECIALISTS LIKE HOLTON NEXT YEAR, AND TO RELY ON PICKING
UP FULBRIGHTERS ALREADY IN EUROPE INSTEAD. WE HOPE THIS
QUESTION IS STILL OPEN FOR DISCUSSION. WHILE THERE WOULD
BE ADMITTEDLY DOLLAR SAVINGS BY PICKING UP ON PERSONS
ALREADY IN EUROPE, THERE IS NO ASSURANCE THAT ALL OR MOST
FULBRIGHTERS HAVE THE UNIQUE QUALIFICATIONS OF POLITICAL
SENSITIVITY, A FEEL FOR HOW THE LOCAL BUREAUCRACY WORKS,
PLUS SKILLS IN RELATING TO THE SPECIAL PEDAGOGICAL-POLITICAL
SITUATION OF CZECHOSLOVAK TEACHERS. AS IT NOW STANDS, THERE ARE
A STABLE OF SKILLED PERFORMERS, SUCH AS THE HOLTONS, DONALD BIGGS,
AND OTHERS, WHO ARE KNOWN AND ACCEPTED QUANTITIES IN
THIS COMPLEX EASTERN EUROPEAN SETTING. IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK
CASE, THE AMBASSADOR STRONGLY BELIEVES AND THE PAO CONCURS THAT
IT IS PREFERABLE TO TO WITH KNOWN PERFORMERS OF
OUTSTANDING ABILITY RATHER THAN RISK OUR FEW OPPORTUNITIES
FOR WIDESPREAD TEACHER AND UNIVERSITY CONTACT ON UNKNOWN
GRANTEES WHO MAY OR MAY NOT WORK OUT.
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